

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly having a fixed type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end portion of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of said intermediate shaft,

wherein one end portion of a stub shaft is connected to an inner joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint via torque transmission portions;

one end portion of said intermediate shaft is connected to the other end portion of the stub shaft via torque transmission portions;

a threaded portion is formed on an outer diameter portion of either the intermediate shaft or the stub shaft;

a nut member threadedly engages the threaded portion; and

a keeper ring is fitted into annular grooves formed on the other outer diameter portion of said intermediate shaft or said stub shaft and an inner diameter portion of said nut member to allow said nut member not to move axially but to be rotatable.

2. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 1, wherein the inner joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint is tightly fitted over the stub shaft, and said stub shaft is tightly fitted over the intermediate shaft.

3. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 1 or 2, wherein a maximum outer diameter of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint is smaller than an outer diameter of the wheel bearing.

4. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claims 1 to 3, wherein of said stub shaft and the intermediate shaft, at least the stub shaft is made hollow.

5. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly having a fixed type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end portion of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of said intermediate shaft, said drive wheel bearing assembly comprising a stub shaft connected to an inner joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint by means of torque transmission portions and an engagement portion, formed on an outer diameter portion of one end thereof, and connected detachably to the intermediate shaft by means of torque transmission portions and an engagement portion, formed on an inner diameter portion of the other end thereof, wherein the torque transmission portions on the other end portion of the stub shaft are made larger in diameter than the torque transmission portions on the one end portion.

6. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly having a fixed type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end portion of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of said intermediate shaft, said drive wheel bearing assembly comprising a stub shaft connected to an inner joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint by means of torque transmission portions and an

engagement portion, formed on an outer diameter portion of one end thereof, and connected detachably to the hollow intermediate shaft by means of torque transmission portions and an engagement portion, formed on an outer diameter portion of the other end thereof,

wherein the torque transmission portions on the other end portion of the stub shaft are made larger in diameter than the torque transmission portions on the one end portion.

7. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to any one of claims 1, 5, and 6, wherein said torque transmission portions are formed of serrations engaged with each other.

8. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 5 or 6, wherein said engagement portion is adapted to have a protruding member arranged on an outer diameter portion of the one end portion of the stub shaft and on an outer diameter portion or an inner diameter portion on the one end portion of the intermediate shaft to prevent axial movement thereof at an end portion of said torque transmission portions.

9. (Previously Presented) A drive wheel bearing assembly having a fixed type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end portion of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of said intermediate shaft,

wherein an allowable plunging down to a bottom portion of an outer joint ring of said sliding type constant velocity universal joint is set substantially equal to a sum of a width of an inner joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint and a length of a projection of the intermediate shaft beyond an edge surface of said inner joint ring, at a minimum operative angle of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint.

10. (Previously Presented) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 9, wherein a stem portion of an outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint is made hollow, and the hollow portion is allowed to communicate with a house portion of the outer joint ring.

11. (Previously Presented) A drive wheel bearing assembly having a fixed type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a wheel bearing, mounted to one end portion of an intermediate shaft, and a sliding type constant velocity universal joint, coupled to a differential, mounted to the other end portion of said intermediate shaft,

wherein an allowable plunging down to a bottom portion of an outer joint ring of said sliding type constant velocity universal joint is set to at least a width of an inner joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint at a minimum operative angle of the sliding type constant velocity universal joint,

wherein a stem portion of an outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint is made hollow, and the hollow portion is allowed to communicate with a house portion of the outer joint ring,

wherein an end cap is mounted to a communicating region between the hollow portion of said stem portion and said house portion, and a communicating portion is formed substantially at a center of the end cap.

12. (Previously Presented) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 9, wherein said wheel bearing is plastically connected to an outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint.

13. (Currently Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 9, wherein a seal boot is mounted on said a stub shaft or on the an outer diameter portion of the other end portion of said intermediate shaft.

14. (Original) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 13, wherein said seal boot is formed of resin.

15. (Previously Presented) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 9, wherein one of a plurality of rows of races in said wheel bearing is formed on an outer diameter portion of a hub ring constituting the wheel bearing, and another race is formed on an outer diameter portion of a separate inner ring engaging an outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint.

16. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 15, wherein opposite edges of the hub ring and the separate inner ring, having said another race

formed on the outer diameter portion thereof and engaging the outer joint ring of the fixed type constant velocity universal joint, are brought into contact with each other, and a coupler collar is mounted to the abutting edge portions of said hub ring and the inner ring.

17. (Previously Presented) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 9, wherein at least one of a plurality of rows of races of said wheel bearing is formed integrally on an outer diameter portion of an outer joint ring of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint.

18. (Currently Amended) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 9, wherein one of ~~the a~~ plurality of rows of races in said wheel bearing is formed on an outer diameter portion of ~~the a~~ hub ring constituting the wheel bearing, and another race is formed on ~~the an~~ outer diameter portion of ~~the a~~ separate inner ring ~~engaging abutting~~ said hub ring.

19. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 18, wherein projections and depressions are formed on one of or both of engagement surfaces of said hub ring and said inner ring; said engagement surfaces are expanded or compressed radially to thereby connect plastically said hub ring and said inner ring to each other; serrations formed on said hub ring or said inner ring are allowed to transmit torque; and a keeper ring detachably engages an annular groove formed on said hub ring or said inner ring, allowing said keeper ring to be axially engageable therewith.

20. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 19, wherein said keeper ring is made circular in cross section and is acted upon by a specified axial force, thereby allowing said keeper ring to contract radially by itself to be withdrawn.

21. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 19 or 20, wherein an outer diameter surface of said hub ring and an inner diameter surface of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint, extended from the engagement surfaces between said hub ring and said inner ring are connected engageably by serrations to each other.

22. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 19 or 20, wherein an outer diameter surface of said inner ring and an inner diameter surface of said fixed type constant velocity universal joint are connected engageably by serrations to each other.

23. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to any one of claims 19 to 22, wherein a serration engagement region is formed on engagement surfaces except for the plastically connected region between said hub ring and said inner ring.

24. (Withdrawn) The drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 19 or 20, wherein an inner diameter surface of said inner ring and an outer diameter surface of

said fixed type constant velocity universal joint are connected engageably by serrations to each other.

25. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 18, wherein the inner diameter surface of said hub ring and an outer diameter surface outboard of a torque transmission coupling shaft are connected engageably by serrations to each other; an outer diameter surface inboard of the torque transmission coupling shaft and an inner diameter surface of an edge portion outboard of said outer joint ring are connected engageably by serrations to each other; a reduced diameter edge portion inboard of said hub ring is plastically deformed radially outwards by caulking to be fixedly pressed against said inner ring in its outboard direction; and an edge portion of the torque transmission coupling shaft inserted from an outboard direction into the inner diameter portion of said hub ring and the outer joint ring are axially coupled to each other by detachable coupling means.

26. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 18, wherein the inner diameter surface of said hub ring and the outer diameter surface outboard of the torque transmission coupling shaft are connected engageably by serrations to each other; the outer diameter surface inboard of the torque transmission coupling shaft and the inner diameter surface of an edge portion outboard of said outer joint ring are connected engageably by serrations to each other; the outer diameter of the torque transmission coupling shaft engaging the serrations of said outer joint ring is made larger at least than said inner ring; the edge portion outboard of said torque transmission coupling shaft is plastically deformed radially outwards by caulking to be

fixedly pressed against said inner ring in its outboard direction; and the edge portion of the torque transmission coupling shaft inserted from an outboard direction into the inner diameter portion of said hub ring and the outer joint ring are axially coupled to each other by detachable coupling means.

27. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 18, comprising a torque transmission coupling shaft for also serving as the inner ring allowed to engage said hub ring, wherein the inner diameter surface of said hub ring and the outer diameter surface outboard of the torque transmission coupling shaft are connected engageably by serrations to each other; the outer diameter surface inboard of the torque transmission coupling shaft and the inner diameter surface of an edge portion outboard of said outer joint ring are connected engageably by serrations to each other; and the edge portion outboard of said torque transmission coupling shaft is plastically deformed radially outwards by caulking to be fixedly pressed against said torque transmission coupling shaft in its outboard direction; and said torque transmission coupling shaft and the outer joint ring are thereby axially coupled to each other by detachable coupling means.

28. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 18, wherein the inner diameter surface of said hub ring and the outer diameter surface outboard of the torque transmission coupling shaft, also serving as the inner ring, are connected engageably by serrations to each other; the inner diameter surface inboard of the torque transmission coupling shaft and the outer diameter surface of an edge portion outboard

of the outer joint ring are connected engageably by serrations to each other; the edge portion outboard of said torque transmission coupling shaft is plastically deformed radially outwards by caulking to be fixedly pressed against said torque transmission coupling shaft in its outboard direction; and said torque transmission coupling shaft and the outer joint ring are axially coupled to each other by detachable coupling means.

29. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 25, wherein a collar portion seated on a rim portion of a bore of the hub ring is provided on the edge portion outboard of said torque transmission coupling shaft, and pins or bolts are inserted radially detachably into the edge portion outboard of said outer joint ring so as to at least axially engage said torque transmission coupling shaft.

30. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 25, wherein the collar portion seated on the rim portion of the bore of the hub ring is provided on the edge portion outboard of said torque transmission coupling shaft; annular grooves are formed on serrations between the edge portion outboard of said outer joint ring and said torque transmission coupling shaft; and a keeper ring is mounted detachably into said annular grooves.

31. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 25, wherein annular grooves are formed on serrations between said torque transmission coupling shaft, and said hub ring and outer joint ring, and a keeper ring is mounted detachably into said annular grooves.

32. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 26 or 27, wherein annular grooves are formed on serrations between said torque transmission coupling shaft and said outer joint ring, and a keeper ring is mounted detachably into said annular grooves.

33. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 18, wherein the edge portion inboard of said hub ring is extended to the inner diameter surface of the outer joint ring of said constant velocity universal joint; an outer diameter surface of the extended portion and the inner diameter surface of said outer joint ring are connected engageably by serrations to each other; and said hub ring and said outer joint ring are fastened axially by bolts and nuts, providing a given maximum fastening force, thereby pressing the edge surface outboard of said outer joint ring against an edge surface of the inner ring at a given pressure.

34. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 33, wherein heat treatment is performed on a portion leading from seal engagement surfaces immediately near a race inboard of said hub ring to said serration-formed region, and on a serration-formed region of said outer joint ring.

35. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 33 or 34, wherein said fastening bolt is press fitted into said outer joint ring.

36. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 33 or 34, wherein said fastening bolt is fixedly clipped to said outer joint ring.

37. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 33 or 34, wherein said fastening bolt is fixed to said outer joint ring by press fitting a seal plate therein.

38. (Withdrawn) A drive wheel bearing assembly according to claim 27, wherein annular grooves are formed on serrations between said torque transmission coupling shaft and said outer joint ring, and a keeper ring is mounted detachably into said annular grooves.